(INDONESIAN EMBASSY TRANSCRIPT- NOT ALWAYS ACCURATE)

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VERBATIM OF A PRESS MEETING

OF INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ALI ALATAS

AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

WASHINGTON, D.C., FEBRUARY 20, 1992

Foreign Minister

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends.

I hope you have progressed far enough with your luncheon, so we can start. I am afraid, otherwise we will be running out of time.

May I, first of all, thank you all for being here today at our invitation. I have wanted, indeed, to have this meeting with you and tell you a little bit about my visit here and what the main purpose was of coming here.

As you know last year, on the 12th of November, a tragic event took place in East Timor, in the city of Dili, which caused a number of deaths and other casualties, people wounded and up till now still missing. This incident was clearly not reflective of the policies of the Government nor was it reflective of the policies of the Armed Forces. And I think that point now has been made very, very clear although at the beginning there have been some misperception and misrepresentation about it. The fact of the matter is that we were just as shock that the incident occurred, as everyone else. We deeply regret the incident and this indeed was immediately and repeatedly expressed by President Soeharto and by the Government on many occasions. It was also a serious setback to us in the context of all the efforts that have so far been taken by Indonesia, to bring harmony, to bring progress to East Timor. And so, I

think this one point is hopefully now made very clear. It is in this context, therefore, that we thought it was rather irrelevant and a bit unfair, especially at the beginning stages, immediately after the incident, to invoke certain comparison to what has happened in Dili and say what has happened in other countries. For example, a comparison to Tiananmen. It is particularly irrelevant and unfair. In Tiananmen, it was Government's order: the troops were ordered to dismiss a demonstration. So, it was clearly Government's policy and Government's order. In Indonesia, in Dili, the demonstration was allowed, the demonstration was publicly announced in the radio and so on and it was allowed. But, then something happened; something went terribly wrong during the demonstration. So, on this fact alone, the comparison with Tiananmen, we believed, is irrelevant. Comparison are never really relevant on the two cases. But, if comparison are going to be made, then perhaps the more relevant comparison is that to say is that this kind of tragedies, this kind of tragic events, unfortunately happened, have happened in the past, even in very developed countries like the United States. I was here, for example, when at Kent State, somehow, something went deadly wrong and American National Guard troops fired at students. We, of course, all know that something went terribly wrong in other places, in Northern Ireland and in Venezuela, a few weeks ago. Now, by saying this, please don't get me wrong. This is not to justify what happened in Dili, not at all. No matter how provoked, troops in general, should not start shooting and causing death unless there is, of course, a situation that make it impossible for these troops to hold fire. So, we have said very clearly that we do not approve of what has happened in East Timor. Our President has said it, our Commission has come up with a very clear report on that. So, I am invoking this comparison rather reluctantly but simply to put things in their proper perspective.

A second point, I think, which I would like to stress is that the demonstration that took place on the 12th of November, of course, was not an entirely peaceful affair, was not an entirely orderly procession dedicated to commemorate the death of a person, a young man called Sebastiao Gomes, who died 14 days before and whose death was being commemorated on that day. The procession, which started from Motael Church to Santa Cruz Cemetery and most along

streets in total of three kilometers long or something, was from the outset taken over by a small group of youths who agitated, who turned it into a demonstration for certain political ends and turned it into a rather disorderly and, sometimes, at some points, was rather destructive demonstration. So, this is the second point I had wanted to just stressed, especially in the first turn, flushed after the demonstration and after the event, the picture that was depicted was rather not quite truthful as if there was a very peaceful procession; people walking from a church to a cemetery and suddenly, out of the blue, Indonesian security forces fired into them, just for the fun of it or something to that effect. That is certainly not the case. Clearly, there were elements of provocation, there were elements of premeditated provocation. And if an illustration is needed for the kind of provocation that unfortunately took place, and turned it into a disorderly demonstration, was the stabbing of Major Gerhan and the wounding of Private Dominggus some time at one point along the line of the demonstration. Yet, the demonstration was still allowed to continue for another two kilometers. The security forces did not do anything at that point and allowed the demonstration to reach the Santa Cruz Cemetery. And there, of course, the situation became such that the unfortunate event took place.

I will only refer now to the Commission report which described to you what they have found has probably happened in Santa Cruz Cemetery amidst an atmosphere of rising tension, confusion and a bit of a riotous condition. So, this is the surrounding facts of event.

As I said, in facing this tragic event, the Government, which I said was just as taken by surprise, in Jakarta acted firmly and swiftly. On the 18th of November, a few days afterward, already the National Commission of Inquiry was established and comprising seven members and headed by a Supreme Court Judge. And it commenced its work immediately and, as you all know, it has submitted its report, its advance report, not a preliminary report, but rather an advance report, a kind of an executive summary, on the 26th of December. Its brief was to have a thorough investigation, to conduct a thorough investigation in an independent, comprehensive and just manner and to delve into all aspects of the November 12 incident. We believed that the

Commission has indeed tried its best to fulfill that mandate and, in its advance report containing the main findings and conclusion it has reached, I think, in a serious way, it tried not only to explain the scope of activities it had engaged in, the analysis of event that took place but it used unambiguous and often blunt language, certainly blunt for our culture, in apportioning blame where blame should be put. It referred, for example, to the action of a number of security personnel which exceeded acceptable norm. It referred to excessive shootings at demonstrators, causing death and wounded. It criticized the lack of proper implementation of riot control procedures, the careless handling of casualties. It severely criticized these points. Also the lack of proper procedure in identifying the deceased. The Commission also refuted earlier version of the casualty toll that were put out by the Army that earlier said 19 deaths and 91 wounded. It stated its own figures, and how it arrived at was not yet completely explained, but let me explain to you that in a few days time their full report will be out and there you will read how they came to the conclusion and how they conducted their work, how many interviews they had with whom, the text of the interviews, and so on. So, finally in its conclusion, the Commission recommended that in order to uphold justice, action must be taken against all those who were involved in the incident and suspected of having violated the laws. They should be brought to trial according to the rule of law and our Constitution and our criminal law procedure, etc.

Now, after receiving the advance report, the Government and the President was equally prompt and firm in their response to it. First of all, the President exhorted the nation and, in particular, the local Government and security apparatus to take the incident as a lesson and as an opportunity for self-correction and introspection. And he also declared that such an incident should not have happened and should never happen again. Then he issued a series of directives addressed to various Ministers and various offices in the Government.

Firstly, he replaced all the responsible military commanders from the regional command in Bali down to the sector commander in the city of Dili. So, not only two generals who were involved although the two generals got, of course, the headlines, but I think six or seven persons, at least, are involved, who were immediately being replaced from, as I

said, the commander of the military region, Udayana in Bali, the commander of the operational command of East Timor and all other officers, down the local command echelon responsible for the incident. Then, the directive to the Chief of Staff of the Army was immediately to set up a Military Council to inquire thoroughly into the policies and actions of the regional and local security officials in handling the incident, and to recommend the necessary steps to be taken. His third directive was addressed to the Attorney-General to initiate legal actions and proceedings against all those suspected of having violated the law. To the Commander of the Armed Forces he issued a directive, and I am quoting from the directive, to search for those listed as missing in order also to clarify the discrepancies in the number of casualties, the deceased, the wounded and the missing. But to consolidate and continue the civic action operations in East Timor which are considered to have been a success.

Now, let me explain, the civic action is where the Armed Forces have been in all over Indonesia engaged also in civic action, that is they go down to the villages, they helped the villagers building bridges, roads, school buildings, playgrounds, buildings that are not too difficult or too complicated to build. This is the civic action program of the Army and that part of the program, that part of the presence of the Army in East Timor has been extraordinarily successful. I have been to some of the places where they are doing. So this is what it was referred to.

To the Minister of Home Affairs, the President directed to effect improvement in the civil service apparatus in East Timor so as to achieve better coordination, more efficacious results in the implementation of Government at the regional level.

And, to the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, he directed to intensi2fy the implementation of development policies and projects. So, I am trying to give you an overall view of how the Government responded on the basis of the recommendation of the Commission. And all of these directives at this moment are already being implemented, different stages of program, but all of them are being implemented.

In addition, our Government readily agreed to the proposal by the UN Secretary-General, Boutros-Ghali, to send Mr. Amos Wako, Attorney-General of Kenya and an international authority on human rights, to Indonesia as his personal envoy in order to obtain clarification on the November 12 incident in Dili.

In the meantime, as you all already knew, Mr. Wako's visit to Indonesia had already taken place. He was in Jakarta and in Dili from the 9th to the 15th of February. He was accompanied by a delegation of five officials from the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. He has held meetings with various people, not only on the Government side in Jakarta and in Dili but also with non-governmental organizations, with, of course, the Chairman and members of the Commission of National Inquiry and with Bishop Carlos Felipe Belo and so on. He has left Jakarta now and on his way to the United Nations. Maybe he has been there already to submit his report to the Secretary-General. We will have to wait and see. That is what we are doing. What his recommendation are after having been to Dili and Jakarta himself for this visit.

The Inquiry Commission's advance report and the Government's responses to it have been more or less evenly received in most governments, in the sense that favorably, in the sense that the action that have been undertaken by the Government were appreciated. They acknowledged the seriousness and firmness with which the Government has proceeded in addressing aspects of this most regrettable incident. Of course, governments and various other parties abroad wanted to know how certain things were being implemented. They posed queries and stressed certain aspects. This, I think, was quite natural and quite acceptable to us. And that way also a part of my purpose of visiting various capitals, is to give clarification and to give explanation where explanation are still needed on certain aspects of what we are trying to do, what we have done and what we are going to do in addressing this issue.

Therefore, we are rather, we deeply regret the fact that one government in particular, some NGOs and certain section of the international media and, of course, and the remnants of the group of political adventurers abroad who called

themselves FRETILIN, or CONVERGENCIA or whatever, persist in disparaging the effort that we have undertaken, persist in disparaging the status of the Commission, dismissing its findings in, what we believe, sometimes, completely irresponsible and unsubstantiated manner. That, I think, is only revealing their inherent prejudice as well as their real political motivation. For example, and I am saying this because I have spoken to them directly so I am not speaking behind their back, I have spoken, for example, to the Secretary-General of Amnesty International who, by the way, is a long time friend of mine and I told him I am deeply disappointed at the way, for example, Amnesty International has reacted to the Commission findings and for what we have done or rather in the way in which they have not mentioned with the single word what we have been trying to do that completely dismissed the Commission findings with one sentence "fatally flawed and totally unacceptable". Well, this kind of reaction are, I think, ... getting very counter-productive if you can't be fair and balanced enough to say the good things with the bad things then you turn people off, you turn people off not only in Indonesia but in the most developing countries there is this persistent view that certain organizations are just out to condemn you, are just out to keep you on the hook. And this kind of report certainly will only strengthen that view. I do not share that view. But this kind of report will only strengthen the view of those who think that organizations such as these are only out to pillory.

Now, we are also, of course, deeply concerned that deliberate act of provocation continue as exemplified now by the dispatch of the ferry boat, the Lucitania Expresso, reportedly with the Portuguese and other youths on board intent upon forcing their way into Indonesian territorial waters and go to Dili and lay wreath at the Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili. Well, frankly, in our candor, I don't think how one can read such an intention other than being wholly provocative. There is no need to express your moral outrage in such a way. Expressing moral outrage, your indignation, moving in various ways to express it is one thing. It is something that is done in international relationship between nations and states. But sending of this kind of the boat hoping I am sure that by trying to go illegally entering into a country and then being stopped by the immigration boat or by the navy,

hoping that another incident will occur, is clearly provocative and has no other purpose, I think. And this concerned us. So, now that more facts have become available, it is Indonesia's hope that friendly governments and objective observers abroad and the international media will be able to have a more balanced and proportional perception and assessment of the tragic event that took place. And this is, again I said, one of the things for which I came here and to other capitals. What we need now is a period of calm so in order for the Government to be able to address to overcome the issue and to deal with its aftermath and its implication in a comprehensive, in a just and a fair way. Allowing I think a campaign against Indonesia, anti-Indonesian campaign to be waged by those obviously motivated by political rather than humanitarian or human rights consideration and objective will, I believe, not only true wholly counter-productive but will only prolong the agony and the tension and turmoil in East Timor. That doing a great disservice to the basic interest of the East Timorese people themselves. Now, what about the longer term solution of this East Timor issue. I had actually wanted, if I have had more time, to give you also a short presentation of the history of the decolonization in East Timor, because, you know, the story has become old. It was 17 years ago, in 1975-1976, when some of you were not even may be old enough to know, but some of you certainly were not interested enough to go into what happened. But 17 years ago a very tragic train of event unfolded in East Timor. This regard to the decolonization process of East Timor, and I had wanted to tell you something about it in order to refresh the memory but also in order to give a counter-balance to what has been the habits of Portugal and its supporters to present as the history of the decolonization.

I think, if you read the paper that I am now going to distribute, you will see that the process of decolonization there was abruptly stopped not by Indonesia but by Portugal when they left abruptly long before Indonesia was involved. And in that short piece, I hope, I will be able to tell you a little bit more about the history just to refresh your memory and you can quote from there and let us just assume that I have presented that paper here just to shorten the time.

I know that you want to pose questions to me and, therefore, I rather distribute my paper and now give you the floor if

you have any further question to address to me. Please.

Allan Nairn (The New Yorker magazine):

Mr. Alatas, my name is Allan Nairn. I am with the New Yorker magazine. I am one of the journalists who witnessed and survived the massacre on the November 12 and I have to say that in your account of the massacre and that of the Investigating Commission appointed by the Government is completely inaccurate. We, Amy Goodman and I, from the Pacifica Radio, were standing between the soldiers and East Timorese. The soldiers marched up the road in formation, holding M-16 in front of them. They turned the corner without breaking stride as soon as they got a dozen yard of the Timorese were standing there peacefully. They were retreating. The soldiers opened fire all at once and simply gunned down the crowd. Dozens of dozens of people, bodies fell everywhere and, as they were doing this, they beat us with the M-16 and fractured my skull.

After the massacre, General Try Sutrisno, who is the Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, gave a speech in which he said, a speech to the graduates of the National Defence Institute, the Timorese who gathered outside the cemetery are, he said, "people who must be crushed." He said "....delinquents like these agitators have to be shot, and we will shoot them". He said "come what may let no one think they can ignore the Indonesian Armed Forces. In the end they will have to be shot down."

President Soeharto then came out with the statement saying that the massacre which was a small, minor matter and when asked about the issue by world's leaders, this is a quote from the President: "I showed them the map where East Timor is located, a tiny, little island called East Timor, that is a small thing that is causing everybody making a fuss. And he said when he showed them the island, they all laughed."

After this, General Sutrisno came out with a statement saying that soon as the investigation was completed, "we will wipe out all separatist elements who has tainted the Government's dignity.

Now, how can you say that this massacre does not reflect the Government policy when clearly from all the eyewitness accounts, the soldiers behave in such a way which indicated that they marched up with the order to commit massacre since there were no interaction between the soldiers and the crowd, they opened fire all at once. Secondly, when after the facts, you have the highest officials of the Indonesian Army, and Government, endorsing the massacre and threatening more killings. And especially considering the context where 200.000 Timorese have been killed by the Army, almost entirely civilians since 1975, and even since the massacre, Amnesty International has said that there have been credible reports of execution of East Timorese who witnessed the massacre and just recently, for example, I was just in Geneva last week and I spoke to one of the Indonesian delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission. And he said that the Army had been interrogating Father Ricardo, who said that morning mass, he was one of the priests in the Dili Diocese, ... and he said in the end that the Army chose not to believe Father Ricardo's account. They would even throw him out of the country or put him in an Army jail. This is the Catholic Administrator of Dili. Given all of these things, how can you contend that the massacre did not reflect the policy .....

Foreign Minister

The Dili Administrator is somebody else. Father Ricardo is not the Dili Administrator. And, please continue!

Allan Nairn

So, how can you say that the massacre does not reflect the policy....

Foreign Minister

I have read your statements everywhere and also of Ms. Amy Goodman. You have been quite active in spreading your testimony around. Now, but before answering your question, please, you have been an eyewitness, was it a completely peaceful procession ? People singing hymns and doing nothing else but just, praying and doing very innocent things. Or was it, or was it a rather wild demonstration, where political, with a political motivation, taunting of insults, of provocation by a couple of you, because we have photographs too, you know, not only you. We have recorded it also and your recording against ours, of

course.

Secondly, have you been able to be everywhere where the procession was may be one kilometer long. Have you been able, for example, because I know you have been denying the stabbing of Gerhan which others have seen, which actually on record. So, what I am saying is, look Mr. Nairn, I know it was a horrible experience for you and Ms. Goodman. I am sorry things happened to you the way it happened. But let me just make as a footnote, have you not come surreptitiously into the country the way you did, but rather declare yourself, fairly and equitably as a free democratic press should do as a journalist. Perhaps, perhaps you would have been treated differently, because we do, we do recognize the rights of journalist, foreign journalist, but, let me finish (interrupted by Allan Nairn: "I let you finish.") They would have known that you are journalist and they would have known how to treat you. But you were suspicious, you were there in the crowd, we didn't know who you were. I am not saying that the cracking of your head was good; I am only saying, and you don't like it when I say it, why did you enter surreptitiously and what did you do, what did you to do and why you were you there and why was Max Stalle there and why was Bhamaday there and why were so many of them suddenly there. You were not tourist, yet you came in with a tourist visa. Right? Is not that a bit unethical, sir?

Allan Nairn — Allright. Give me an answer of the question.

Foreign Minister — Isn't that a bit unethical?

Allan Nairn — No, it is not unethical.

Foreign Minister — Of course, it is not because you have your .....

Allan Nairn — As an American, we do not need a visa to go to Indonesia.

Foreign Minister — As a tourist.

Allan Nairn — We simply go to the airport, you are asked to write your profession

Foreign Minister — No, you're wrong.

Allan Nairn — Excuse me, sir. I am trying to response to your question.

Foreign Minister — You're wrong. You were interpreting our laws wrong.

Allan Nairn — ..... I went in as a correspondent of the New Yorker magazine to write an article on East Timor; Max Stalle went in as a correspondent for New York Television, work on the documentary; Kamal Bhamaday, the young man who is an New Zealand citizen, he went in as a translator for the Australian aid agency. He was killed in the massacre. Now, you ask about the procession. No it was not for just religious procession. The Timorese also, were making a political statement. And this is clearly why from the statement of General Sutrisno, the Indonesian Army, and I gathered from your statements, why the Army responded as it did. The Timorese were engaging in something which is prohibited in East Timor, that's quite true. Public assembly and public speech are prohibited for the East Timorese. And these people were carrying banners which praise the Pope, supported the Bishop, which supported the cause of the East Timorese independence, supported Xanana who is the leader of the Timorese underground. They were holding banners and making political statements. And the Indonesian Army regards that as a crime. And as the people were walking, and as we were talking to the various people, I asked them "how do you think the Army would response to this." And many of the people said, well, we know that we are risking our lives, we know that this is very risky, we know that this is prohibited by the Army, but we want to make the statement anyway because the Army had attacked our church. So, I think, your statement really further illuminated the fact that the response by the Indonesian Army to politics on the part of the East Timorese is violence, and I wish that now I have address your question and you could address my question. How can you explain a way the repeated statement of General Sutrisno who is, after all, the Commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces, where he said very explicitly "these are people who must be crushed, delinquents like these agitators have to be shot and we will shoot them. ..... that no one can ignore the Indonesian Army and in the end they have to be shot down. Is that not, sir, a statement of Indonesian policy?

Foreign Minister — The statement was taken out of context. General Sutrisno,

immediately the next day, made the clarifying statement which you can read, of course, which you do not put into your file. Your statement, sir, contained only half truth. That's the problem, and you are.....

Allan Nairn — Let me say the little thing.....

Foreign Minister — You see, every time I speak you interrupt.

Allan Nairn — I am sorry, go ahead.

Foreign Minister — Will you let me now answer your questions, and I apologize to the rest because this become a dialog which was not I meant to do in this meeting, of course.

Please, you have been involved, emotionally you are involved and perhaps politically you are involved. You are not in our eyes a very, I am sorry to say, I am saying bluntly to you, a very objective observer. May be not now, may be not before. We don't know what your motivations were, in being there among the crowd since five o'clock in the morning, that was not exactly the action of a tourist, you know.....

Allan Nairn — You are right about that.....

Foreign Minister — .... And be there among the crowd, of course, you caused the suspicion, confusion, and the confusion of the situation. Something bad happened to you. I am sorry, as I've said, but that should not make you forget that there were others who saw the same things. There are places where you were not there every time. You may have a different perception, because you have already a political stance or a political view to which you are entitled. All I am saying to your other colleagues is, and I think, it is up to them to declare themselves. You were not nor have you been a very objective, a story-teller of what really happened. Now, of course, you are entitled to that. It shows from the way you always tell half truth, you know. Father Ricardo was never interrogated. He was asked politely to tell his side of the story which he readily gave on several occasions to the Commission of Inquiry and now to the officials of our Attorney-General office. He cannot be thrown out of the country. We don't even have a grip on the clergy of East

Timor, because they are directly under the Vatican, including the Apostolic Administrator. We have no grip on them, there are extraterritorial there. Did you know that? If you don't know it, accept it.

Allan Nairn — That's right, but look at Bishop Belo came to be there, as you know his predecessor denounced the massacre in Manatuto in which more than 300 people were killed and in which, by Bishop's account, Indonesian troops slit open pregnant women and smashed babies.... After this, this is according to the Bishop's, ... (interrupted directly by Menlu).

Foreign Minister — And, of course, you believe it.

Allan Nairn — After this General Benny Moerdani, when he became Indonesian Defense Minister, moved to have the Bishop removed through consulting with his friend, the Papal Nuncio in Jakarta. And the delegate to Human Rights Commission, Indonesian delegate, who has spoken in Geneva said that it was the Army initiative to remove the Bishop and installed Mr. Belo, the current bishop, and if they didn't believe Father Ricardo in interrogation, they will put him into jail.

Foreign Minister — ... into jail.

Allan Nairn — To jail as well.

Foreign Minister — No. We never made that kind of statement.

Allan Nairn — You mentioned of the replacement of generals. The new commander in East Timor, as soon as he came into office, he gave a press conference. General Syafei was reported by Reuters on January 10, in which he said he was not as patient as his predecessor. He said that the previous commander has been too lenient. He was going to adopt a harder line. And he said the November 12 incident might reflect the people aspirations but it was a rebellion. He said this kind of public political manifestation had to be cracked down now. Was that the General's mistaken in saying that? Is that not a policy?

Foreign Minister — Again, it was completely taken out of quote. I shall, I wished you would read the whole things what people say. The

whole speech or the whole remarks in Indonesian and then see whether it based a really, a well translated into English. That's the problem sometimes. Mr. Theo Syafei is going to continue the policy of Mr. Warouw, who, by the way, was a good man and he has now been replaced. But, that's because in the Armed Forces, you have to take, if you are a commander, you have to take the responsibility of what happened under your command. But, listen, Mr. Nairn, we have a very little time. If I were only to entertain your questions, that would not be too fair to the others. May be I should ask others too. Not because I can't answer you. I can. But let me say it very clearly. I've read all your statements. You have been everywhere making statements and so on. As I said, you're entitled to your view but, please, give me the entitlement to consider you not an objective journalist anymore, but someone engager involved politically. Fine, that's fine. Let us treat each other that way, right? But don't give different heads to yourself. You want to be a journalist, you want to be treated as a journalist, then act like a journalist, come into a country like a journalist. Tell what you're going to do. If you want to be a political engager man for a certain cause, fine. Do it. I mean it is free. You can do it. The demonstration is not prohibited. Demonstrations are allowed under the relaxed rules that were operational.

Allan Nairn — It was not in the General's statement, sir. He said that General Warouw was too lenient .... to let the demonstrations to go forward and now this kind of thing is no longer tolerated.

Foreign Minister — That's not what he said.

Arnold Cohen (freelance)

Were not the five Australian journalists who were murdered in 1975 by Indonesian troops. When they came in and they were declared journalists, they were shot down.

Foreign Minister — Look, again.

Arnold Cohen — What about the journalist being barred from your press conference in London?

Foreign Minister — Which one?

Arnold Cohen	Malcolm Coleman
Foreign Minister	Oh, no. They were not barred. There was a big press conference in which everyone was present, those who were invited.
Arnold Cohen	They were photographed. According to "The London Independent" yesterday, anybody that was asking questions had their photograph taken. Indonesia simply want to pick and choose what journalist they want to ....
Foreign Minister	No. No. But we could not have all the journalists of London at my press conference.
Arnold Cohen	The room was half empty and, at the end, about five journalists were barred from the room.
Foreign Minister	Who said so? Were you there?
Arnold Cohen	"The London Independent" yesterday.
Foreign Minister	That is an exaggeration again that is so simplistic its.... Have you been there in London?
Arnold Cohen	I was there just last week. I interviewed these people. We just have clarified ....
Foreign Minister	Is this a choosy thing. Can't we invite people.
Arnold Cohen	I was just making a point that there has been a problem in the past, that the recent problem of November 12 .... have been discussed, and will be discussed.
Foreign Minister	Of course. Do you know the true story of the five Australian journalists?
Arnold Cohen	I know something.
Foreign Minister	Fine. Tell me. What was the story? There was a fighting going on, right? Where did they come from? Through the Fretilin, not through us. They did not declare to us. We did not know anything. We were not even involved there. There was fighting. They knew there was fighting. They knew that there was a very fluid situation on the ground, yet they

came. They were given guarantee by the Fretilin that everything was safe. So they went to the front and got caught in crossfire of the fighting and since then ....

Arnold Cohen

According to eyewitnesses, they were shot down because one was still speaking .... When he was shot down openly in broad-day light, not in the crossfire.

Foreign Minister

This is the kind of misrepresentation that have been haunting us now for so long and have been kept alive in the Australian press and has poisoned the relationship between Indonesia and Australia, because this episode has been always exaggerated to that extent exactly ... and now it gets a validity because it is repeated and repeated and repeated ad nauseum by everyone and mutual quotation. So many things on East Timor have suffered that same fate. So many things. I can show you so many instances where a non-fact has been repeated and repeated and repeated until it becomes a fact. For people who don't .....

Arnold Cohen

These witnesses were at Indonesian side at that time .... These people who talked the specific incident .... articles by Australian journalist Hamish MacDonald, who has written book "Soeharto's I2ndonesia" ...(not get along friendly with Indonesia) .... generally speaking.

Foreign Minister

I don't know what you're talking about.
Yes....

Mario Crespo (Portuguese TV)

I have a couple of questions. Would you accept any proposition for talks via, through negotiation (?) with Portugal with a view to change the situation in East Timor, Sir?

Foreign Minister

Well. I have been made aware that my counterpart, Foreign Minister Pinero has reportedly submitted a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, proposing the resumption of talks between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the Secretary-General. But the Secretary-General of the United Nations has not had any opportunity, perhaps yet, to give , to talk to me about it. So, I can not

claim that I know exactly what the content of the proposal is. So, I can't really comment on the proposal. But let me tell you in general terms, however, that the talks have been happening between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the Secretary-General since '83 until a few months ago. And many things were achieved in those quiet talks, tripartite talks that have proceeded from '83 until a few months ago, until the talk broke down because of the falling through of this plan for a visit by the Portuguese parliamentary mission as you know. Now, if it is the purpose to resume those tripartite talks exactly in the same form as them before, you will find Indonesia always receptive to this and always prepared because, as the record shows, throughout the talks since '83, Indonesia has always been very cooperative and Indonesia has always agreed to whatever was agreed or proposed by the Secretary-General. But, as the record shows, why Portugal reneged on an earlier commitment to agree on a certain plan or solution. I am opened for scrutiny by any part on the document for what I've just said.

Mario Crespo

Mr. Minister, the parliamentary visit that you are referring to called off... by Portugal, alleging that you have violated the agreement. Then you said that it was a document which allowed both countries actually to decide upon that the delegation, in the words of journalists that went there, the so-called record of understanding that there was a general agreement for the visit .... Does such a document exist?

Foreign Minister

No. I've never said that it was in the main document. No, it was not in main document. The main document that was published did not have the record of the talks that we had in order to resolve three issues. The issues were done into the main document. But there were three issues before we reached full agreement.

One was the issue of visa, in which the Portuguese side said "we don't want to have any visa on our passport or even on side paper to enter into Indonesia." We first insisted on visa, but we gave in. And, finally, it was agreed that the parliamentary mission, the whole mission, would come in without visa and we were given the opportunity to make a short statement as an annex to the main agreement. You may have studied the main agreement. You may have seen that

statement.

The second point was how would they come. And first the Portuguese side insisted on going straight into Dili, not going by way of Jakarta. So we pointed out to them "look it was you who asked for the invitation from our Chairman of Parliament to your Chairman of Parliament." It was Portugal who asked. So, isn't common courtesy required that you just passed through Jakarta, make a visit to the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament, make a statement whatever you like to make there, saying that your being in Jakarta does not in anyway conferred recognition or whatever, but please pass through Jakarta. You can't just fly straight into Dili. There the Portuguese finally gave in and that was arranged, and you can see, in the main agreement or MOU.

The third problem was the problem of foreign correspondents, as part of the official delegation. The Portuguese side said "we want foreign correspondents to be part of the official delegation." And we said "foreign correspondents usually come by themselves. We already have a list of foreign correspondents who will come by themselves to Dili. Why should you have, apart from your own correspondents, foreign correspondents in your official delegation?" "That is highly unusual," we said. So, then they said "No. But we insist. And you may choose six, we may choose six." And so we explained even that is not acceptable to us, we said, because we may choose correspondent you don't like and you may choose correspondent we don't like, because we think some correspondents will not contribute to the purposes of the visit, namely to write as objective report as possible that will help in finding a solution to the problem of East Timor. But they insisted and so, finally, at the last day before the signing of that MOU, Portugal and Indonesia were called by the Secretary-General's Representative and a compromise was proposed, namely, to Indonesia, you accept as a part of your bargain the six journalists from Portugal and you appoint yours; and Portugal, as part of your bargain, you agree that all the 12 will be concurred by you. So that there is no further problem. We accept it, and they accept it. And then they put up a list. And on the list was my old perennial nemesis, Miss Jill Jollief. I know Ms. Jill Jollief for long. I don't know for how long. I know her writing. I know her book. That she has never written anything positive

about Indonesia ever since she left East Timor. So we said quietly to Portugal side "look we told you we will have problems. Could you kindly replace her with anyone else? And here is our list. Do you have any objection to our list?" The reaction was astounding. They said "no, we insist on her". But we said "we have an agreement. We had an understanding". "No, we insist, otherwise the mission is off". That was a wrong way to rub us really, we haven't negotiated for two years just to have quarrel about one journalist's name. And it has nothing to do with press freedom. But, two days later, in an unprecedented move, from Portugal, there was an announcement that the Portuguese mission was canceled. Even the Secretary-General did not know, because I immediately phoned him and he said he was very surprised. The Deputy, Mr. Rafeeuddin, he didn't know. We didn't know and that's how the mission was aborted. And these are the facts. And I said the actors in this unfortunate drama, little drama, are still alive. Why don't you ask them? Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed is still in New York. Mr. Perez de Cuellar is still somewhere. Why don't you check who is lying?

Mario Crespo

One more question. What is your actual attitude towards East Timor? In this course that you are ready to resume talks with the Portuguese. Are you ready to review the whole status of the region? Are you willing to grant it the possibility of some sort of general election or referendum or changing the status, considering it is the Indonesian territory?

Foreign Minister

Well. Please read the text that I have distributed that you know precisely our position. I cannot in a few words repeat what I have stated there.

Mario Crespo

Yes or no. Are you willing to change the present status and consider East Timor as an Indonesian territory?

Foreign Minister

We considered that in 1976 the overwhelming majority of the people of East Timor have decided their fate and have decolonized themselves in the face of the irresponsible abandoning of the territory by Portugal as they have done in Mozambique and as they have done in Angola. The people there took over and overwhelming majority decided to opt for independent through integration. That situation stands even today and we don't see why we should reverse that

decision democratically arrived at, simply to follow the whims or the obsession of a small minority. There have always been a minority before. Now they are even a smaller minority who still call themselves Fretilin and are in abroad, in exile, and being very vocal but not representing the East Timorese people. Is that a clear answer?

Mario Crespo — Is there any risk for the lives of the people that will eventually go on this boat to Dili? Do you think that Indonesian forces will receive them with military honor or something?

Foreign Minister — Let see, let see what will happen. That was an incident.

Mario Crespo — Your statement sounded quite threatening, Sir. Your statement .....

Foreign Minister — No. Please. If it sounded threatening, it was not meant to be threatening. I asked myself what purpose such sending a boat could have other than being provocative, isn't it? That was the thrust of what I said, but I was not threatening anything. I am concerned about this provocative act. I hope nothing will happen. I hope, and I think, hopefully we will not fall into that trap. But this is clearly something that can only have one meaning, and that is provoked the Indonesian. Let them do some stupid act by going there, going against the laws, all regulations and just fought ourselves there and see what and how they will react. That is not a very helpful attitude on that side, right? Can't you see the problem from both sides?

Mario Crespo — O.K.

Foreign Minister — O.K.

Barbara Crossette (The New York Times)

Can I ask you, sir? As someone who has been in the custody of Indonesian Army, whether there have ever been any review about policy. I hate to make discussion about journalism but that is obviously what we have done. Ever any review about the policy, about what people are going as correspondent and what people don't, because right from the

start this has been a problem and by barring a lot of people from going to Indonesia you also invite people coming in without, human rights people, without proper credentials. Have any of this incident, I mean what happened to me, is very small compare to what happened to them, but or any of other people. Has there been a sense may be you are looking at the policy admitting the press.

Foreign Minister — We are continuously looking at the policy that are now enforced with regard to not only journalists but other things. But, I think, I hope you can see is that it is the prerogative of a sovereign government to say which people they want to receive and which they don't. I think it is a prerogative of US Government also. I think even the US Government has a blacklist of people for various purposes; so do we. So, why picked on us? Ask any government whether they have a blacklist of people, I am sorry to use the word "blacklist", but whether they have such a list of people. It is a prerogative of any sovereign government. Now, you may not like it if you are at the receiving end of that policy. That does not mean that, therefore, that policy is inherently wrong. No.

Barbara Crossett — No. I think what I am trying to say it is unnecessarily creating problem to Indonesia.

Foreign Minister — Yes, it creates problem, unfortunately. I am known in my country has a feeling that everybody should come in and we will deal with them as long as they are ethically reporting themselves as such. I am the one who has always said "let all of them come and we deal with them" rather they see Indonesia and then, hopefully, they will see the real Indonesia, rather than they mix, rather than they caricature of Indonesia that our detractors are so fond of describing as a country basically trigger happy people no culture at all. I mean you have been to Indonesia. Some of the caricatures that I read about my country, I don't recognize ourselves bad, but that is what happened when people have a particular ax to grind, unfortunately. It happens not only to Indonesia; it happens to many countries. Of course, I realize that.

Foreign Minister — Yes, sir. Last question!

Bambang Harimurty (Tempo)

Being an Indonesian journalist usually being critical to the Indonesian Government, but likely on the other side of the coin right now. I am just wondering, I talked to some people who considered any other government where . There are softliners, hard-liners on East Timor issue. We had better followed the Indian when they gobbled up Goa, no problem. But Indonesia being so nice, they wait so long, even Foreign Minister Adam Malik sent a letter about the independence of FRETILIN and then, you know, all these accidents when the Portuguese left all the thousands of guns causing a civil war, so then the next thing happened. If we just did like the Indian gobbled up Goa, probably no problem. But the other things .... I don't think we shouldn't do that, like the Indian did.

But, on the other hand, I remember of Captain Westerling, in 1950s he admitted himself killing four thousand people.

Foreign Minister Forty thousand.

Bambang Harimurty He admitted in his book. Indonesia claims forty thousand but, being a journalist, I am somewhere in between. But knowing... journalist going all over the world trying to ..... action ..... against the Dutch Government for letting him alive very well.

Foreign Minister Unfortunately Amnesty International and Asia Watch were not active then at that time.

Bambang Harimurty But my point is, I think, ... I am quite sure Mr. Allan Nairn and Ms. Amy Goodman ..... very well. I am totally ashamed to what happened in East Timor accident. But, let put it this way .... I think Marxism, Karl Marx in Russia ..... and so on. But, don't you think that we should move into a more better future? I mean for one million dollar for the boat trip to Dili like Mario said .....

Foreign Minister I have dedicated half of my diplomatic career in trying to find precisely that kind of a solution between reasonable man, between rational man and for the sake of the East Timorese, but you need two hands to clap and it is about time that I am not the only one that is trying to clap. Portugal must come forward also with a clear policy of wanting to solve the problem and not having a double-face

approach to this. On the one hand quietly telling us wanting to find a solution but, in public forum, lashing out at Indonesia, putting us on the hook at every single opportunity.

Arnold Cohen

Knowing that you are decent man and that people of East Timor said that the torture continues day by day that hundreds of people brought in trucks from the interior in recent days for interrogation which the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture reported in his report released recently is more or less routine in outlying areas of Indonesia. So, these are problems that Portugal didn't caused whatever the Portugal did in 1975 had nothing to do with what happened to the Timorese since 1975 when Indonesia moved in. I mean, these are questions need to be solved, with Indonesia giving some ground as well.

Foreign Minister

Fine. These questions can be resolved. These questions are continuously being handled. We never claim that we are 100 percent pure on human rights. No. No countries can be, even your country admits that occasionally there is police brutality, occasionally there is an excessive beating, occasionally there is torture in many countries. But we reject the picturization that there is a systematic policy of torture, a systematic and sustained incident of torture and so on and we reject that picturization and we will continue to reject it because we know that it is not true. However, as regard the improvement of the human rights situation, that is an entirely different thing in East Timor, I mean, than continuing to talk about self-determination in East Timor and being so hypocritical as saying that in Angola and in Mozambique where there were no resort whatsoever to 1540 where the Portuguese were in the same way departed but because the ones who won were ideologically compatible to the Portuguese at that time. Of course, Frelimo won, and Frelimo was ideologically was compatible at that time. So they said in Mozambique, decolonization has taken place. In Angola, the same. The MPLA won or was winning when they left. So they said the decolonization has taken place in Angola. Everybody knows the fighting went on. More, more fighting than in East Timor ever. In East Timor their boys didn't win. Well. You win some, you lose some. Don't be a bad loser.

Amy Goodman (The Pacifica Radio)

Sir, final question. Do you support the policy that now more than dozens of people, now being survived and now being tried with charge of subversion that the penalty could be death.

Foreign Minister

Well, the fact of the matter rather than the fiction is that there are only a total of 56 detainees. And I know that in Jakarta there has just been an official statement on that. Out of the 56; 32 in Dili; 22 in Jakarta; two in Denpasar, only 4 will be tried on subversion charges, because there are sufficient evident that they were the actor intellectualist, even before the incident. And another 12 will probably be brought to the court on general criminal offenses and the rest will probably be released. Now I, at least, concede and I am grateful that Asia Watch, because I told them "are you going also to report the facts?" and they said they will report the fact and I understand Asia Watch has come out with these figures and so let us debunk these hundreds of people who are waiting in the death cells and so on. You know on subversion charges, the record shows that although, as a maximum, the penalty is death, for a long time, now, no body gets the death sentence in Indonesia.

Amy Goodman

You said that in November 12 massacre was not the Indonesian policy. Now, after the massacre the soldiers shield off the cemetery so the medical and religious people could not go there. Afterwards, Red Cross was not allowed to visit people in hospitals, wounded, for more than two weeks. Kamal Bhamaday, a New Zealander, who was killed, his family tried to come in to Dili to find the body but they were prevented from that.

Foreign Minister

No. That is not true. No. They went to Bali and by the time, the remains of Kamal Bhamaday were already sent to Jakarta. So, there was a miscommunication. It was not a prevention. They were already on the way to Dili when the remains were already flown to Jakarta. Please, I mean, keep to the facts.

Amy Goodman

With the cemetery being shield off, the Red Cross was not allowed to visit the wounded for more than two weeks. The medical and religious people were not allowed to administer to the wounded at the cemetery. Whose policy was that? Was

that the policy of the soldiers or the policy from ....?

Foreign Minister There was a lot of confusion and there was a lot of tensions immediately after that. But immediately the government has, please take the government position now. Now that the Commission has given its report; now that the government has made very clear what the policy is. Why can't you take that as the government policy, because that is the government policy and the rest are aberration. Can't there be aberration in a certain situation where there is panic, there is a riotous condition.

Allan Nairn Mr. Minister, Bishop Bello told us that, before the massacre, the Indonesian Army was telling people ....

Foreign Minister I have to go, I've really to go.

Allan Nairn .... that Indonesian army warned people that anyone to try to speak with the Portuguese Delegation have their family killed for seven generations.

Foreign Minister That is the kind of disinformation, sir, which we have been facing now for a long long time.

Allan Nairn So, you are saying that Mr Bello putting up disinformation?

Foreign Minister Yes, if he indeed has spoken that way, then it is disinformation, because it is not true.

Allan Nairn Why did Bishop Bello put up with disinformation?

Foreign Minister I don't know. I frankly don't know. Why don't you ask him. Because we have been mystified by some of the things he said. Frankly, I have no answer to that. I've spoken to him. When he speaks to me, he speaks differently. And then I see, the next day, another statement from him. I am frankly mystified.

Allan Nairn We spoke to the Indonesian troops, they said the same thing. Were they also putting up disinformation?

Foreign Minister Well, ladies and gentlemen. I am sorry. I could have stayed for a long time, but I have a very important meeting with the senators. I should not let them wait.

Thank you very much, indeed.

Foreign Minister You are from Portugal?

Mario Crespo Yes Sir.

Foreign Minister All your colleagues came in Brussels and London too. So, I hope the other will get that this gentlemen is now quoting ... will soon disappear ... that I am afraid that I am picking and choosing about press. Because I want to retain my reputation. I am the most accessible minister in Indonesia to the press, because I happened to have been a journalist myself.

Mario Crespo Will you allow me to East Timor, Sir?

Foreign Minister Perhaps not now, because it is still a bit difficult. I hope that you see the difficulties that we are still in. But, one day, all of you can come. In fact, had your government agreed to the agreement, you could have come in with that parliamentarian mission. Why don't you ask that question? Why did they renege?
That was a golden opportunity for you to come in. O.K?